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1-9 W37R2  
JULY WEATHER AND CROPS

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, Delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 NBC associate radio stations, Wednesday, August 9, 1933.

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Weather of the mid-summer month, July, is very important as affecting the final output of some of our principal crops. Most of you know the critical, or most important, month for different crops, during which, we might say special brands of weather best suited for that particular crop is needed if good yields are to be realized. You know, also, that the character of weather desired for some crops may be unfavorable for others. I do not have to tell you farmers that May and June, for example, must have plentiful rainfall for a good hay crop, and that grass needs moisture all summer long; that spring wheat requires moderately cool weather and adequate moisture during June, and that July is very important in the development of such crops as corn and potatoes.

July, this year had rather large fluctuations in temperature, especially in the more eastern States, but, in general, the month was decidedly warmer than normal, except in the East and South. Previous high temperature records for the month were equalled or broken at a number of places in the central and eastern portions of the country, with New York City, Erie, Pa., Bentonville, Ark., Oklahoma City, Okla., Valentine, Nebr., and Huron, S. Dak., reporting the highest temperatures of record for the month; at a number of other stations previous high records were equalled.

Rainfall also was irregular. It was above normal in a limited area of the Northeast, extending southward to the city of Washington, and also along the south Atlantic coast and in Florida. It was decidedly above normal in the central Gulf area, extending westward to eastern Texas and northward to Kentucky and extreme southern Illinois. In addition there were a few other limited areas with more than normal precipitation, but, otherwise, the amounts were less than normal, decidedly so in the middle Mississippi and lower Missouri Valleys and in the northwestern Great Plains. In Montana preliminary reports show that the month had less than half the normal rainfall, and at the close severe drought had developed in that State.

Broadly speaking July weather this year was unfavorable for crops in most Central and northern portions of the country and generally favorable in the South. The unfavorable feature in many central and northern sections was the scanty rainfall, following a dry June, which, this together with high temperatures, caused serious-widespread damage. In the Northwest, late small grains, such as wheat, oats and barley, were unfavorably affected, especially on dry-farming lands of the West, and corn was hit pretty hard over wide areas. Pastures became generally short, making the feeding of livestock necessary in some interior and northern sections. The Atlantic States and the South, where more rainfall occurred, fared much better. The cotton crop, especially, was favored rather generally, and especially in the eastern part of the belt.

Since the first of August the reaction to cooler weather in the Northern and Western States, together with more widely distributed and rather generous showers from the central and upper Mississippi Valley eastward, and less rain in the central Gulf States, made favorable crop-growing weather in most localities

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east of the Mississippi River. The rains were especially timely in New England, New York, Michigan, and the Ohio Valley States.

In the Atlantic area conditions are decidedly favorable as far South as North Carolina, with this State now enjoying more soil moisture than at any time during the present season. However, South Carolina needs rain, and showers would be helpful in parts of eastern Georgia.

Between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains, soil moisture is still decidedly inadequate in many places, especially in the northern and central Great Plains, about half of Missouri, parts of Iowa, and much of Minnesota, but lower temperatures were favorable; this last week was the first relatively cool week in the upper Mississippi Valley since corn planting time.

In the Rocky Mountain States beneficial rains occurred during the past week, but were largely too late for dry-farm small grain crops; the cool weather, however, favored sugar beets, and the range shows improvement in many sections. Utah is still unfavorably dry, much of Idaho needs rain badly, and the burning of fruit in California by last week's high temperatures is now more apparent.

Threshing winter wheat and oats has been practically completed in the main producing sections, with generally favorable weather; in Iowa later reports show oat yields slightly better, but they are still generally disappointing. In the spring wheat region harvest made good progress in the later districts, with threshing well advanced and nearing completion, except in the western part; yields are showing the effect of the long-continued drought.

The eastern Corn Belt has been favored by rains sufficient to promote rather definite improvement in the general outlook, though in many places of the Ohio Valley damage from previous dryness is irreparable, and little improvement will result. In Illinois, especially, the crop is decidedly variable, ranging from practically a complete failure to a limited amount of corn, principally in the Northwest, in excellent condition; in general the crop in this State has suffered heavy, permanent damage. In the Atlantic area condition of corn is decidedly favorable.

In Iowa recent progress of the crop has been fair to very good in most of the State, but decidedly unfavorable in many counties; the bulk of the corn is in roasting ear stage. In Missouri beneficial showers occurred in about one third of the State, with unfavorable dryness elsewhere; much early corn is permanently damaged in this State and a large part of the late is stunted.

In the States from Oklahoma to North Dakota, in limited areas, principally northeastern Kansas, eastern Nebraska, and southeastern South Dakota, recent progress of corn has been fair, but in other sections development was poor and much permanent damage has been done by hot, dry, weather.